

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed July 11, 2003, and the telephone interview with the Examiner on October 8, 2003. To clarify various aspects of inventive subject matter, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 20, 28, 31, 35, and 48. In order to advance prosecution of this Application, Applicants have responded to each notation by the Examiner. Applicants submit that all pending claims are allowable over the cited reference. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Election/Restriction

Applicants responded on February 10, 2003 to an Election/Restriction mailed by the Examiner on January 21, 2003. Applicants have withdrawn Claims 57-64 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejects claims 1-9, 13-21, 24-31, 35-43, 45, and 48-54 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,563,614 issued to Stephens ("Stephens"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his time spent discussing this case with Applicants during a telephone interview on October 8, 2003, and for his thoughtful consideration of this case. As discussed during the telephone interview, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 20, 28, 31, 35, and 48 to clarify the claimed subject matter.

Amended Claims 1, 20, 35, and 48 are Allowable over Stephens

Claims 1 and 35, as amended, recite "correlation history comprising a plurality of entries each correlating a value of the first setting to a value of the first operational characteristic, at least two of the entries reflecting correlated values of the first setting and the first operational characteristic determined at different times." As discussed with the Examiner during the October 8, 2003 telephone interview, *Stephens* does not teach or suggest these features. Claims 20 and 48, as amended, recite maintaining for a plurality of optical elements in an optical link, "a link history comprising a plurality of entries each correlating a value of the first setting to a value of the first operational characteristic for each of the

plurality of optical elements, at least two of the entries reflecting correlated values of the first setting and the first operational characteristic for each of the plurality of optical elements determined at different times." As discussed with the Examiner during the October 8, 2003 telephone interview, *Stephens* does not teach or suggest these features. Moreover, to the extent that *Stephens* discusses storing any information in a memory, *Stephens* specifically requires storing all information about each separate optical element in a separate and independent memory for each element, teaching away from a link history as claimed. Therefore, *Stephens* fails to teach or suggest a "link history," as recited in Claims 20 and 48.

For at least these reasons, Claims 1, 20, 35, and 48, as amended, are allowable over *Stephens*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1, 20, 35, and 48, as well as all claims that depend from these claims.

Amended Claims 28 and 31 are Allowable over Stephens

Claim 28 and 31, as amended, of the present application recites, in part, the following:

accessing a memory comprising:

monitored information comprising a plurality of values each describing at least a first operational characteristic of an optical element measured at one of a plurality of different times; and

provisioning information describing at least a first setting of the optical element, the provisioning information correlated with at least some of the monitored information; and

retrieving the provisioning information and the correlated monitored information

As discussed with the Examiner during the October 8, 2003 telephone interview, *Stephens* does not teach or suggest these features. For example, *Stephens* fails to teach or suggest "monitored information comprising a plurality of values each describing at least a first operational characteristic of an optical element measured at one of a plurality of different times," as recited in amended Claims 28 and 31.

For at least this reasons, Claims 28 and 31, as amended, are allowable over *Stephens*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 28 and 31, as well as all claims that depend from those claims.

Claim Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejects Claims 10-12, 22-23, 32-34, 44, 46-47, and 55-56 10-12, 22-23, 32-34, 44, 46-47, and 55-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Stephens*. Claims 10-12, 22-23, 32-34, 44, 46-47, and 55-56 depend from, and include all the limitations of, amended independent Claims 1, 20, 31, 35, and 48, which are allowable for the reasons discussed above. Therefore, 10-12, 22-23, 32-34, 44, 46-47, and 55-56 are allowable over *Stephens*. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of Claims 10-12, 22-23, 32-34, 44, 46-47, and 55-56.

CONCLUSION

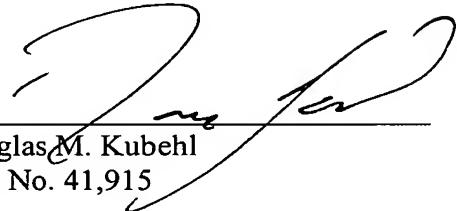
Applicants have made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and full allowance of all pending Claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference or an interview would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the undersigned attorney for Applicants stands ready to conduct such a conference at the convenience of the Examiner.

Applicants believe that no fees are due. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge additional fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts, L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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